

April 14, 1965

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Dear Luca:

I was sorry to hear the news that distresses you and Alba. For a moment I was even alarmed further that you might be referring to Adriano, but I would immediately discount the possibility that you would hedge on even so delicate a question. In any case, I have talked to a number of my colleagues here and can give you the following summary impression.

The provable benefits of intensive rehabilitation at this age are quite slim, and most of the progress that can usually be expected from patients of this kind should be attributed to the progress of the underlying therapy of the disease, which is of course the most important consideration. If there was serious damage to begin with, then this in itself will limit the possibilities of intensive rehabilitation. There are, of course, serious blunders that can be made, like over-rigorous confinement, but my colleagues feel that the understanding of the situation is general enough that there would be unlikely to be any serious doubt about it. The Neurological Institute at Rome does seem to have a certain reputation in this field, and might possibly be your wisest choice, particularly if travel to the States would impose not only a financial burden for the patient, but also strains on the family who were interested in his welfare.

The outstanding world center for rehabilitation therapy along these lines is at Bellevue Hospital under Dr. Rusk, and at least on a nominal basis one could hardly do better than send the patient there. However, I was cautioned not to expect such a great deal more from one regime as compared to another that it would definitely justify not only the cost, but the other stresses of moving from Italy. In any case, I could hardly see any grave disadvantage to communicating with Rusk in a somewhat more detailed way so that his own advice could be of material use to you and Alba in reaching a decision.

We will of course be delighted to see you in early September at the dates you mentioned, September 3 to 6, and only regret that your trip cannot be both longer and sooner.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Cavalli